

Monitoring Report - Executive Limitations Policy  
EL-5, Educational Leadership

BOARD POLICY EXPECTATION

The Superintendent shall not fail to provide educational leadership for district staff required to achieve the Board's Ends Policies.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby present my monitoring report on Executive Limitations Policy EL-5 "Educational Leadership" in accordance with the monitoring schedule set forth in board policy. I certify that the information contained in this report is true as of November 16th, 2021.

SUPERINTENDENT'S INTERPRETATION OF POLICY

I interpret this expectation regarding educational leadership to mean the board believes it is important for the superintendent to serve both as a district and community leader in positive and practical ways, and to advocate on behalf of our students, parents, and taxpayers of this district, the value of public education.

REPORT

There are nine specific areas described in this policy. The following will address each specific area of EL-5 as best as possible. At the time of this report, I believe that the district is IN COMPLIANCE with the Board's expectations.

1. The superintendent shall not fail to project a strong image of instructional leadership to all stakeholders. IN COMPLIANCE

With so many distractions coming from OSPI and Olympia, I am working to ensure we focus on our mission-critical work, specifically reading and mathematics. The mission of the La Center School District is a valuable tool that can unify our work as a school district around why we are here: develop confident and self-reliant lifelong learners who can thrive. With the disruption of reading instruction and the piloting of new mathematics materials, we are poised to really make learning gains for our students. We will continue to focus on the District Strategic Improvement Plan where we will set goals, build plans, and maintain our direction. The structures are in place to support this work as well. We already have significant success with our graduates, whether they attend linesman school or MIT, enlist in the military or attend West Point. The work we are doing with our elementary students specifically in the area of reading and mathematics will pay off long into the future. Returning to the start of the school year, the administrative team completed a book study on *Coherence*, by Michael Fullen and Joanne Quinn. Working

with our administrative team, I am confident that we are moving in the right direction together.

2. The superintendent shall not fail to communicate an optimistic vision for the mission and the work of the district and public education. IN COMPLIANCE

With so many distractions from our mission, it has become even more critical that we communicate effectively so the appropriate messaging shares the amazing work our entire staff does in the support of students' learning. I am constantly working to project a strong instructional leadership image through planning and communication with internal and external stakeholders. Friday updates continue to be a valuable tool to communicate with our staff and board on what is happening around the district. Periodically, I also send information home to keep parents in the loop about what is happening around school.

I meet with every new employee, welcoming them to our team. I have a unique opportunity to meet, discuss, and plant seeds about our mission and the Ends policies. I also have the opportunity to build relationships, one of the cornerstones of our work with students, staff, and families. The conversation typically focuses on the district's mission, self-reliance and our students' ability to thrive. We continue to be a great place to live and work, something I talk with patrons about frequently.

3. The superintendent shall not fail to possess and use up-to-date educational knowledge in the course of their work. IN COMPLIANCE

Through the 2021 MTSS District Implementation Cohort Grant, we have a coach, Solina Journey, through the ESD that will help with our second goal of our District Strategic Improvement Plan in supporting students who struggle. The key is to provide support through instruction within the general education classrooms. This grant is a three-year learning process starting with our administrative team, moving to build leaders, and then into the classrooms. Given the work necessary to support students post-COVID closures, I believe this is the most up-to-date training and learning necessary to grow our system toward continuing to serve all students.

4. The superintendent shall not fail to maintain and enhance his/her own educational knowledge through continuous learning. IN COMPLIANCE

I am building my network of superintendent colleagues to which I have had to call periodically to learn what is happening in other districts. Sometimes the network can assist in making sure we are the cutting edge and not the bleeding edge. I am continuing my membership with WASA, Washington Association of School Administrators. I am working with a mentor who is a colleague of mine from a prior district for which I worked. I will continue to attend professional development with our staff as we work toward our mission and the training that goes with that journey. I also have access to Dave Holmes

as we frequently talk through situations. Continuing a partnership with Green Mountain School District is also beneficial as many of their students become our students past eighth grade. On a final note, I hope to attend the small school's workshop this spring and potentially other WASA events as necessary to extend my learning.

5. The superintendent shall not fail to maintain and consistently communicate that student achievement is the focus of district staff efforts. IN COMPLIANCE

Student achievement is the focus of our work as a district as stated in our mission. "... thrive in a rapidly changing, more technologically advanced, and diverse society." I often use the phrase before the word "thrive" to talk about what we are doing to get them ready to thrive. We cannot guarantee outcomes, however, we can prepare students for the rapidly changing world they are in and heading out into after high school. This is a hard transition. In years past I have had conversations with students who did not want to leave high school. The world can be a scary place outside of school. However, as Win pointed out as a celebration captured in the September board meeting minutes, "Mr. Muffett spoke about recent graduates of La Center School District. He said that the graduates go into many different fields and the list is impressive; from dental hygienists and nurses to loggers and engineers. There are graduates currently at Harvard, the Air Force Academy, West Point, MIT, and Johns Hopkins. This shows that this district turns out kids that are ready for the workforce and for college. What they accomplish is amazing." I completely agree with his celebration. Additionally, we do have students who drop out and no longer attend. Once in the world of work or unsure of their direction, they may choose to come back to finish prior to their 21st birthday. Routinely, (possibly 2-3 times a year) throughout the school year, we hold small graduation ceremonies when a student achieves and earns their diploma. These are also amazing ceremonies as the diploma is a gateway to a better future for themselves and their families.

6. The superintendent shall not fail to research and utilize the best and most effective instructional practices as the foundation of their work as the top education leader. IN COMPLIANCE

We continue to refine our work and there are no shortages of ideas on how to make public education better. I truly believe the best research can be developed with an amazing team of folks who contribute their knowledge, and as a team, continue to develop our craft and make learning better for kids. I continue to read books and articles to stay in tune with what is happening in the education profession.

7. The superintendent shall not fail to respond to the changing needs of students/parents in a positive and proactive manner. IN COMPLIANCE

If there is anything that we've learned in this pandemic, it is the ability to adjust to changing needs of our parents, kids, and staff as we adjust to the ever-changing parameters from the state. One benefit to our COVID experience is that our community is more involved than ever in our school board meetings. There are a variety of opinions such as, mask, no mask, vaccinate, or not ... the board and myself have remained steadfast ensuring that our community has the opportunity to voice their opinion in our open public school board meetings. Regardless of all the challenges we have faced there is one constant. We work to keep kids in school. La Center led the way in bringing students back to in person learning. We know through the COVID shutdowns from spring of 2019 through spring of 2021, the best place for our students is in our classrooms. We also know that there is much ground to make up for lost learning due to limited access. We will continue to push forward and maintain our focus on the district mission through the strategic plan.

8. The superintendent shall not fail to ensure that a high-quality curriculum is in place at all levels and that staff effectively use approved instructional materials to meet district, state, and national standards that are approved by the Board. IN COMPLIANCE

For several years, we have coupled the curriculum process with many other administrative tasks as we absorbed the loss of an administrative position. From the start of this school year, we have split that position into two separate positions, a Director of Student Programs and a Director of Teaching and Learning. Specifically, the Director of Teaching and Learning has been supporting district-wide collaboration around the areas of curriculum materials as well as instructional strategies. We wasted little time refining our direction, planning for collaboration, and supporting changes as we learn and grow as a staff with our students. We are initiating this work through an instructional cycle focused on instructional strategies. Within the area of reading, we are building supportive materials for reading interventions, professional development for paraeducators and teachers, and collaborating around the data in order to drive instruction. A similar path for our mathematics materials, specifically Bridges, works to combine all elementary students under one set of materials. Additionally, we are piloting grades six through Algebra II within the same materials. We continue to keep an eye on intervention materials to support students who may struggle with the concepts. On top of all this, we are working to provide professional development within the areas of MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) and UDL (Universal Design for Learning).

9. The superintendent shall not fail to provide the appropriate professional development necessary for staff to use the approved instructional materials. IN COMPLIANCE

We are working to develop a professional development system that is supported through our District Strategic Improvement Plan that encompasses, MTSS, UDL, and picks up the pieces of PBL (Problem Based Learning) that can overlay on any set of materials. A unique feature of this work moving forward is to ensure that administrators are trained

either initially, or alongside our staff so they can grow their instructional leadership practice along the journey toward accomplishing our mission.